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ABSTRACT

A chart presents average composite scores on the ACT Assessment by state for 1998 ACT-tested graduates. The states are listed in alphabetical order, with the percentage of total graduates tested and the average composite score given for each state. Also included are the average scores of students who have completed the recommended core high school curriculum, average scores for students who have not completed the core curriculum, and average scores of students for whom no course completion data were available. The percentage of students tested varied greatly among the states: only 2% of Rhode Island's high school seniors took the ACT Assessment, while 81% of Mississippi's high school graduates took the assessment. In Oregon, the average composite score was 22.7, while in Washington, DC, where only 10% of the students took the assessment, the average composite score was 17.6. A cautionary note urges that the list of average scores should not be interpreted as providing grounds for an explicit or implicit ranking of the various states' educational systems because the students taking the examination may not be representative of the state's graduates. (SLD)

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ACT Average Composite Scores by State

1998 ACT-Tested Graduates

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Cautions on the Use of State Aggregate ACT Scores

The ACT Assessment comprises four curriculum-based achievement tests designed to assess critical reasoning and higher-order thinking skills in English, mathematics, reading and science. These tests reflect students' skills and achievement levels as products of their high school experience and serve as critical measures of their preparation for academic coursework beyond high school. ACT Assessment results are used by postsecondary institutions across the nation for admissions, academic advising, course placement and scholarship decisions.

The accompanying list of average scores should not be interpreted as providing grounds for an explicit or implicit ranking of the various states' educational systems. Students who take the ACT Assessment are self-selected and do not represent the entire student population. Further, the percentages of students taking the ACT Assessment vary a great deal from state to state, as do those students' backgrounds and characteristics. Many factors--among them, motivation and the desire to learn, parental support, the quality of teaching, socioeconomic status and extracurricular experiences--contribute to individual and group student achievement. However, a core college-preparatory program can be identified as one significant precondition to success on the ACT Assessment and in postsecondary studies. ACT defines a core college-preparatory program as four years of English and three or more years each of mathematics (starting with Algebra I), science and social studies courses.

For a state with a high percentage of ACT-tested graduates, comparing the percentages and average composite ACT scores of the core and non-core completers reveals, in general, large differences in overall student achievement and postsecondary preparation. For a state with a low percentage of ACT-tested graduates, however, the differences between core and non-core completers are not as definitive.

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ACT Average Composite Scores by State
1998 ACT-Tested Graduates

State	Total		Core Completers		Non-Core Completers		No Course Data	
	% of Graduates Tested*	Average Composite Score	% of Total Tested*	Average Composite Score	% of Total Tested*	Average Composite Score	% of Total Tested*	Average Composite Score
Alabama	64	20.1	65	21.4	33	17.7	2	19.0
Alaska	37	21.3	43	24.0	25	20.9	32	18.0
Arizona	29	21.4	70	22.1	27	19.7	3	20.4
Arkansas	68	20.4	75	21.1	20	18.0	5	18.6
California	12	21.2	65	22.0	31	19.3	4	21.1
Colorado	63	21.6	58	22.7	39	19.9	3	21.0
Connecticut	3	21.8	40	22.4	41	21.3	20	21.5
Delaware	4	21.3	67	22.2	31	19.2	2	22.2
Washington DC	10	17.6	66	17.7	28	17.0	7	19.8
Florida	39	20.8	71	21.7	24	18.2	5	19.9
Georgia	16	20.2	76	20.9	19	17.7	5	19.6
Hawaii	18	21.6	68	22.4	26	19.9	6	20.9
Idaho	63	21.5	50	22.8	47	20.1	3	21.3
Illinois	69	21.4	52	22.9	46	19.7	2	20.4
Indiana	20	21.4	60	22.6	35	19.4	5	21.6
Iowa	65	22.1	68	23.2	31	20.0	2	21.1
Kansas	74	21.7	55	23.2	43	19.8	2	21.3
Kentucky	67	20.2	43	21.1	55	19.6	2	19.5
Louisiana	76	19.5	69	20.5	28	17.0	3	19.7
Maine	4	22.0	38	22.7	51	21.6	11	20.7
Maryland	10	20.9	71	21.3	24	19.6	5	20.5
Massachusetts	5	21.6	45	21.9	41	21.3	13	21.3
Michigan	68	21.3	58	22.5	40	19.6	2	19.9
Minnesota	63	22.2	71	22.8	26	20.4	3	21.9
Mississippi	81	18.7	62	19.9	36	16.7	2	17.9
Missouri	66	21.5	61	22.8	36	19.5	3	21.0

* Totals for graduating seniors were obtained from *Projections of High School Graduates by State and Race/Ethnicity 1996-2012*, Copyright © by Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education, February, 1998.

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State	Total		Core Completers		Non-Core Completers		No Course Data	
	% of Graduates Tested*	Average Composite Score	% of Total Tested*	Average Composite Score	% of Total Tested*	Average Composite Score	% of Total Tested*	Average Composite Score
Montana	56	21.9	58	23.2	40	20.1	2	20.6
Nebraska	71	21.8	67	22.8	32	19.8	2	20.3
Nevada	43	21.4	64	22.2	33	19.7	3	21.2
New Hampshire	4	22.5	51	23.1	34	21.9	15	21.7
New Jersey	4	20.7	36	21.4	57	20.4	7	20.5
New Mexico	65	20.1	53	21.4	44	18.7	3	18.9
New York	15	22.0	64	23.3	29	19.4	7	21.2
North Carolina	12	19.4	65	20.3	31	17.5	4	18.3
North Dakota	78	21.4	64	22.7	34	19.1	3	19.8
Ohio	60	21.4	63	22.6	35	19.4	2	20.8
Oklahoma	69	20.5	53	21.9	44	19.0	4	19.4
Oregon	12	22.7	60	23.8	37	21.0	3	21.4
Pennsylvania	7	21.4	68	22.2	27	19.8	5	19.2
Rhode Island	2	22.2	45	22.5	47	21.9	8	21.5
South Carolina	14	19.0	70	19.8	26	16.9	5	18.8
South Dakota	70	21.4	65	22.2	33	19.7	2	19.8
Tennessee	77	19.8	63	20.9	35	18.0	2	18.4
Texas	32	20.3	69	21.2	28	18.0	3	19.3
Utah	68	21.6	45	22.6	53	20.8	2	20.8
Vermont	7	22.0	44	22.7	47	21.3	9	21.6
Virginia	6	20.7	66	21.4	26	19.0	7	19.9
Washington	18	22.6	57	23.4	41	21.4	2	21.7
West Virginia	60	20.1	45	21.2	53	19.2	2	18.8
Wisconsin	66	22.3	62	23.1	36	21.0	2	21.7
Wyoming	65	21.4	55	22.6	43	20.0	2	20.5
National	**37**	**21.0**	**61**	**22.1**	**36**	**19.3**	**3**	**20.3**

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